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May 4, 2010

For Immediate Release

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Walmart to Pay Record \$27 Million Settlement for Environmental Violations

Employees Illegally Dumped Pesticides and Hazardous Chemicals

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey joined with California Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. and 18 other District Attorneys throughout the state to announce a 27.6 million settlement with Walmart for violation of environmental laws.

The settlement, signed Tuesday May 3, 2010 by San Diego Superior Court Judge Linda B. Quinn provided that Walmart will pay \$20 million in penalties to 20 prosecutors and 32 environmental health agencies throughout California. Walmart will also pay \$1.6 million for the costs of investigation and \$3 million for Supplemental Environmental Projects benefitting the communities in which Walmart stores are located. Store expenditures for hazardous waste management and environmental compliance will increase an additional \$3 million. Butte County will receive \$80,000.00 in fines and penalties divided equally between the District Attorney and Environmental Health.

Butte County Division of Environmental Health cooperated in the investigation and found a number of violations at the Chico Forest Avenue store. These included maintaining storage areas with spills and leaks of unknown hazardous materials, failure to train employees on health and safety responses to hazardous material releases, and storage of incompatible chemicals. Various other labeling and paper work tracking violations were noted starting in inspections from 2003 through 2006.

Federal, state, and local investigators spent thousands of hours documenting violations of various protective rules and laws. The investigation began after an off-duty

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employee of the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health observed a Walmart employee dumping bleach down a sink drain in April 2005. Later review of the hazardous waste disposal policies reveals omissions and violations of the public health and safety laws.

In Solano County a child was found playing in a mound of fertilizer left near the garden department. The yellowish colored powder contained ammonium sulfate, a chemical and human irritant found in fertilizer, insecticides, and herbicides.

As a result of this settlement, Walmart is required to make substantial upgrades to its environmental management systems to prevent future violations and protect its workers and customers.